THE MINISTEROF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE(DR.C. P. THAKUR): (a) and (b) Health being a State subject, State Governments areprimarily responsible for providing health facilities to the people. However, to provide better medical facilities a comprehensive network of rural health infrastructure has been set up under the Basic Minimum Services Programme. The Central Government is also assisting the States under the National Health Programmes for Control of Malaria; TB, Blindness, Leprosy, AIDS Cancer Iodine Deficiency Disorders, Mental Health and Family Welfare Programmes. Efforts are also being made to increase the outreach of health care services in rural areas through Swasthya Melas. Reproductive and Child Health Camps, Dai Training and Reproductive and Child Health Programmes. Under Pradhan Mantri's Gramodaya Yojana, funds are released to further the goal of primary health care through strengthening of Primary Health Care Institutions. Central Government has been making every effort to augment the resources for the health and family welfare sector by mobilising external assistance from various bilateral and multi-lateral agencies. Besides, for upgrading the rural hospitals in selected States, World Bank assistance is being availed of, which would farther improve delivery of health services.

(c) Some of the initiatives taken by the Government during the last two years on the issues of containing the growth of population and expediting the pace of implementation of National Family Welfare Programmes include adoption of a comprehensive National Population Policy; Constitution of National Commission on population and an Emprowered Action Group and Upgradation of Health Infrastructure.

State level Illness Assistance Fund in Andhra Pradesh

1388. DR. DASARINARA YAN A RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether State level Illness Assistance Fund is functional in Andhra Pradesh to provide health care and hospitalization to the poor in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Central grants are being provided to the fund regularly; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A State-level Illness Assistance Fund has been set up in Andhra Pradesh vide GO No. Ms. 123 dated 23-4-97.

(c) Govt, of A.P. had contributed a sum of Rs. 10 crores to this Fund in the year 1997-98. Accordingly, a sum of Rs. 5 crores (50% of the contribution made by the respective State, and the maximum grant-in-aid that can be released to a State in a year under the Scheme) was released vide this Ministry letter No. 7-41/97 F-1I (NIAF) dated 31 st March, J 998. Thereafter the Government of AP requested for a further release of Rs. 5 crores during March, 2001 stating that Govt, of AP had released a further sum of Rs. 2.5 crores to this fund in February, 2001.

(d) No further assistance could be realased as Govt, of AP have not furnished utilisation certificate and performance report for the earlier grant-in-aid released during 1998 and have also not furnished proof of deposit of further releases to Andhra Pradesh Illness Assistance Fund in a separate Bank account, which are essential pre-requisites for release of grants under this Scheme.

Developing Cure for Anthrax by JNU Scientists

1389. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US is leaning away from time-tested antibiotics like Cipro to other drugs for the treatment of Anthrax related hazards;'

(b) whether a team of scientists from JNU has developed a cure for Anthrax related problems; and

(c) the preventive measures Government are taking to tackle chemical/ biological warfare?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) Drugs for Anthrax are mainly antibiotics like Penicilin, Ciprofloxacine and Doxycycline. Each patient is treated according to the sensitivity of the organism to the anti-biotics.

(b) Yes, Sir. The preparation is yet to undergo animal/clinical trial.

(c) Government has taken following actions in the context of the present international scenario:

(i) A detailed list of biological agents used as weapons prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research aiong with signs and symptoms, likely method of dissemination, incubation period, lethality and the availability